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Executive in Residence program gives SBA new perspective

By Flori Meeks

Oakland University's School of Business Administration is joining forces with experienced business leaders who want to give students and faculty the benefit of their experience.

The business leaders – the SBA has four today – are participants in the SBA's Executive in Residence (EIR) program, now in its third year. The program is yet another way the SBA is integrating real experience with education.

Program volunteers – mostly retirees – maintain regular office hours on campus and serve the SBA where they're most needed.

"They're available to teach and work on projects for the school," says Linda Bowers, EIR coordinator and special projects manager at the SBA.



New this year is Executive Affiliates, an offshoot of EIR that refers university representatives to business leaders willing to accept speaking engagements. The program soon will have a Web site that links users to speakers in particular areas of expertise.

The EIR program is a resource that everyone in the SBA can tap into. "The executives bring a perspective after spending decades in the corporate world that students don't get in the classroom," she says. "They also bring a level of expertise that's helpful and relevant to our mission."

Volunteer Dave Rooney is new to the EIR program, but the retired marketing executive has served as a guest lecturer for the SBA for several years. "That's always very rewarding and stimulating," Rooney says. "The Executive in Residence program is a natural extension of that."

"One of the strengths of OU's business school is the interaction, the dialogue and the debates that take place in the classroom," he says. "Having an EIR adds a new dimension to those discussions."

Rooney is looking forward to more classroom time, along with one-on-one interaction with students where he can provide advice on class projects, career pursuits and the interview process.

During the course of his 30-plus year career, Rooney has worked in the marketing departments for Ford and Chrysler. His experience includes brand management, advertising, pricing, research, public relations and product development.

Other EIRs for the SBA include: Van Jolissaint, retired corporate economist from DaimlerChrysler who also serves as an advisory member for the SBA Economics Department; Don Kaegi, former field operations manager from Ford, working with the SBA to provide career assistance and guidance; and Ken McCarter, retired group vice president in union relations for Chrysler, whose expertise includes collective bargaining and the labor contract administration process.

"With the EIR program, we are bringing a variety of real-world business experience to the school and adding an important perspective," Rooney says.

SUMMARY

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